

HISTORY EDUCATION NEWS

History Content

4

Best Practices

6

Teaching Materials

8

Issues and Research

10

Digital Classroom

12

TAH Projects

14



ISSUE
08 | SEP
2011

featuring
**Teaching with the
Founding Documents**



HISTORY EDUCATION NEWS

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About

Teachinghistory.org is designed to help K-12 teachers access resources and materials to improve the teaching and learning of U.S. history. Teachinghistory.org is funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Office of Innovation and Improvement Teaching American History (TAH) program (ED-07-CO-0088). It builds on and disseminates the valuable lessons learned by more than 1,000 TAH projects designed to raise student achievement by improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of traditional U.S. history. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Created by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University.

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Cover image: "Preamble," Mike Wilkins, 1987, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Teaching with the Founding Documents

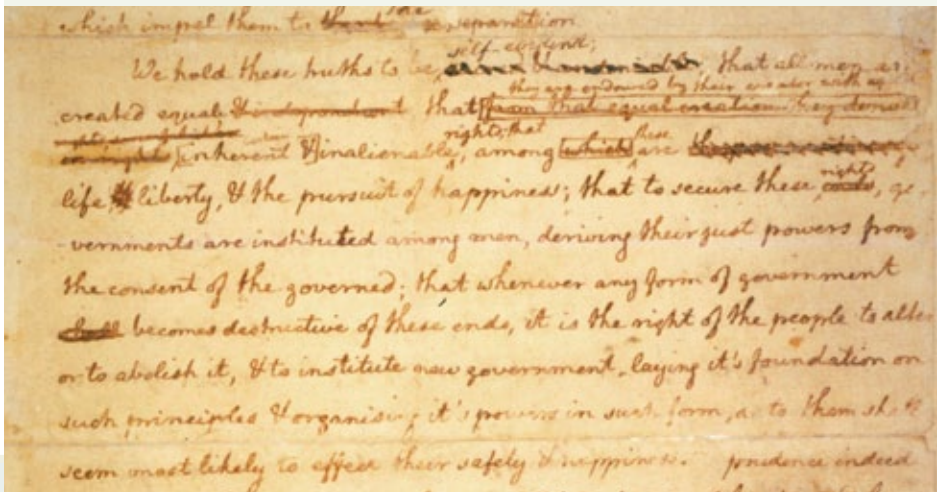
America is not a nation built on a common ethnicity, religion, or other identifying trait. Instead, America is built on ideas. When the colonies declared independence, those ideas were set forth, as Thomas Jefferson said, “to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we [were] compelled to take.”

As a country built on ideas, we turn to the founding documents to help explain the roles and responsibilities of both the government and its citizens. They are what unite us as a nation. As educators, the founding documents can be powerful tools to discuss issues such as equality, freedom, and the role of government. While Constitution Day provides one opportunity to reflect on the importance of these ideas, themes from the

founding documents can be a linchpin of your curriculum throughout the year. Working with these texts can be challenging due to complex language and ideas, but various scaffolding strategies help make the process easier.

Use the many resources in this issue to incorporate these critical documents into your curriculum and teach them using new and effective strategies.

History can be messy. Examining early drafts of founding documents shows that the process took much thought, discussion, and editing to reach the final product. Credits: (left) “Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence,” Thomas Jefferson, June 1776, Library of Congress, hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mjtj.mtjbib000156. (right) “Writing the Declaration of Independence, 1776,” Jean Leon Jerome Ferris, 1932, Library of Congress: LC-USZC4-9904.



History Content

Looking for ways to incorporate the founding documents into your classroom? **Teachinghistory.org** can help you find quality websites, primary sources, and multimedia presentations.

Website Reviews

CHARTERS OF FREEDOM

teachinghistory.org/history-content/website-reviews/22746

Explore the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights in this National Archives website. Related documents and scholarly articles accompany high-resolution images and transcriptions of each document. Students

will enjoy “signing” the Declaration in an online activity.

LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASES

teachinghistory.org/history-content/website-reviews/22282

Developed by Street Law and the Supreme Court Historical Society, this website features seventeen pivotal Supreme Court cases, ranging from *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) to *Texas v. Johnson* (1989). Each case file offers background materials, excerpts of majority and dissenting opinions, and a link to the full-text majority opinion. The site also includes ideas for engaging teaching activities such as creating moot courts, analyzing political cartoons, and simulating legislative debates.

[Linda Brown Smith, Ethel Louise Belton Brown, Harry Briggs, Jr., and Spottswood Bolling, Jr. during press conference at Hotel Americana], Al Ravenna, June 9, 1964, Library of Congress: LC-USZ62-112705.



“Governor Edwin P. Morrow signing the Anthony Amendment—Ky. Was the twenty-fourth state to ratify,” January 6, 1920, Library of Congress: LC-USZ62-78691.

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER: EXPLORE THE CONSTITUTION

teachinghistory.org/history-content/website-reviews/25040

This website provides resources for contextualizing the U.S. Constitution and assessing its lasting impact. An interactive Constitution provides line-by-line scholarly commentary alongside excerpts from contemporary sources. Other interactives include “Abraham Lincoln’s Crossroads,” in which students grapple with the political choices Lincoln faced during his presidency, and “Seize the Vote,” which tests voting rights knowledge.



Virginia's George Mason refused to sign the new Constitution because it included no "Declaration of Rights." His stand led to the eventual creation and adoption of what came to be known as the Bill of Rights. "George Mason Memorial, Washington, DC," Chris Preperato, March 2011, teachinghistory.org.

History in Multimedia

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

teachinghistory.org/history-content/history-in-multimedia/19774

In this Gilder Lehrman Institute video produced by NBC Learn, historian Carol Berkin of Baruch College explains the intent of the Articles of Confederation and why they ultimately were inadequate after the Revolution.

Ask a Historian

JAMES MADISON'S FAILED AMENDMENTS

teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/21861

Q. James Madison proposed twelve amendments to the Constitution, but only ten were approved. What were the two that were not?

A. The first of these would have established how members of the

House of Representatives would be apportioned to the states....The second of Madison's twelve amendments forbade Congress from giving itself a pay raise: Congress could vote for a raise but it would only apply from the beginning of the next Congress. This amendment also failed to gather the required number of state ratifications. Interestingly, in 1982 university student Gregory Watson found a description of this amendment and realized that it remained "alive." Read the full answer online to learn what happened to Watson's discovery at teachinghistory.org.

"James Madison, 4th president of the United States," H.R. Robinson, 1836-1842, Library of Congress: LC-DIG-ppmsca-24329.



Colonial Williamsburg's Gift to the Nation Electronic Field Trip: A More Perfect Union

teachinghistory.org/history-content/history-in-multimedia/25060

From September 6 to September 30, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is offering complimentary access to this electronic field trip about the conflict and compromises that accompanied the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Best Practices

Teachinghistory.org provides examples of teaching and learning in actual classrooms to help you develop activities and lessons that promote historical thinking.

Teaching in Action

Perfect for Younger Students

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND ROLE-PLAYING

teachinghistory.org/best-practices/teaching-in-action/14947

Watch videos that document the practice of a fifth-grade teacher in New York teaching a unit titled *Colonial New York: Developing*

Perspectives through Historical Role Play. This fourteen-week, standards-based unit covers colonial America up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The site provides materials documenting the teaching of the unit, including the teacher's initial plan; video clips of classroom activities and teacher reflections; classroom handouts and historical sources; and student work.

Many history teachers use role-playing in their classroom. What is less commonly done, however, is illustrated in these videos: structuring learning activities so students' roles are closely tied to the time and place within which they are imagined.

READING AND THINKING ALOUD TO UNDERSTAND

teachinghistory.org/best-practices/teaching-in-action/20795

Watch as students in this eleventh-grade honors U.S. history class ask if the internment of Japanese Americans during World



"School children, Manzanar Relocation Center, California," Ansel Adams, 1943, Library of Congress: LC-DIG-ppprs-00354.

War II was constitutional and read primary sources to formulate answers. The teacher structures the class to support student reading as they struggle with complex language and difficult concepts.

Examples of Historical Thinking

BILL OF RIGHTS

teachinghistory.org/best-practices/examples-of-historical-thinking/24424

Whitman Ridgway, professor of history at the University of Maryland, College Park,

explores the historical context and concerns behind the creation of the Bill of Rights. He also examines specific amendments, looking at their wording, impact, reasons for inclusion, and interpretation over time.

“One of the frustrations in studying the Bill of Rights is that you would expect to go to the *Annals of Congress* and find a full discussion of people defending the freedom of religion or attacking the fact that it’s too expansive a guarantee of individual liberties and things like that, but it’s not the case. There seems to have been a consensus at the First Congress as to what a Bill of Rights should be, similar to the Declaration of Rights on the states.” —Whitman Ridgway

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: SCHOLAR ANALYSIS

teachinghistory.org/best-practices/examples-of-historical-thinking/25049

Watch as George Mason University professor Rosemarie Zagarrri demonstrates



“Students at River Bend Middle School carefully examine a copy of the Declaration of Independence,” Chris Preperato, 2008, teachinghistory.org.

critical analysis of the Declaration of Independence by asking questions about the document’s origin and its reason for being. She provides tips such as reading the document aloud, breaking it down phrase-by-phrase, and looking carefully at what words are chosen and why. She also demonstrates how to break down the document section by section to uncover its meaning and purpose.

Civil War Poster: Coming Soon!

How do you piece together the history of the Civil War?

teachinghistory.org/poster-request

Pre-order your FREE copy of **teachinghistory.org’s** latest classroom poster in honor of the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Civil War. Designed for classroom use, this poster poses questions that help students uncover the many stories of the Civil War.

Friend us on Facebook at



facebook.com/teachinghistory.org

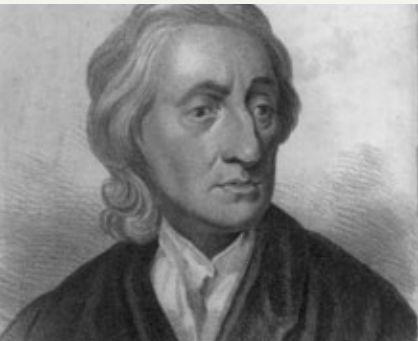
Spotlight on Constitution Day

Find resources for teaching Constitution Day from EDSITEment, the Library of Congress, and others at teachinghistory.org/spotlight/constitution-day.

Teaching Materials

Looking for ways to help make complex language and concepts from the founding documents easier for your students to understand? Explore teachinghistory.org for ideas on how to teach for understanding or to improve lesson plans.

"John Locke, 1632-1704," n.d., Library of Congress: LC-USZ62-59655.



Teaching English Language Learners

LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY: WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/english-language-learners/24139

This lesson plan for younger students combines history and civics to guide students through a process of evaluating John Locke's theory of "living in the natural state" as a basis of the U.S. Constitution. Students discuss and learn about basic constitutional freedoms and rights and "lock in" these concepts through an exciting mix of brainstorming, framed discussion, and writing techniques designed especially for English Language Learners. The article includes downloadable handouts.

Lesson Plan Review

Classroom teachers review and critique lesson plans according to the [teaching-history.org](https://teachinghistory.org) rubric. Download a copy at teachinghistory.org/files/rubric.pdf.



[WPA: Federal Theater Project: figures silhouetted against backdrop of Constitution], 1935, FDR Presidential Library and Museum.

THE PREAMBLE TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION: A DISSECTION

teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/lesson-plan-reviews/24213

In this lesson from Consource, students use primary sources related to the U.S. Constitution (specifically Madison's notes on the convention) to better understand the Preamble to the Constitution. This provides a great opportunity to teach an important element of historical thinking—the use of multiple sources to better understand the significance and meaning of one source. Appropriate for grades 4-9.

TEACHING WITH HISTORICAL FILM CLIPS: NEW!

teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/24299

This guide provides grade-specific examples for using non-fiction historical film clips to teach students how to question films like any other source. Examples addressing McCarthyism, Japanese American incarceration, and slavery in the colonies provide video clips, background material, supplementary historical sources, and core questions that lead students to think historically.

"Senator Joseph McCarthy," n.d., U.S. Senate Historical Office.



Ask a Master Teacher

DECIPHERING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/ask-a-master-teacher/24270

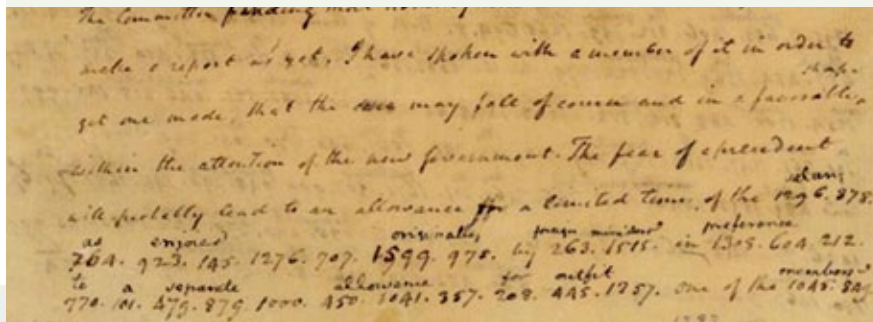
Q. I'm trying to teach my secondary students how to read documents from the eighteenth century (such as letters) and notice how bogged down they get because of the complexity and length of the sentences. What tools or advice could I give that would help them develop this skill?

A. Your question captures a problem many history teachers face. First, let us congratulate you on engaging your students in the raw materials of the discipline and persisting even when the going proves difficult. Syntax can be a major stumbling block for students when reading older texts: we recommend scaffolding and careful preparation of the documents to help your students meet the challenge.

To learn new techniques, read the rest of this answer online at teachinghistory.org.

Are you facing a pedagogical challenge in your classroom? Visit teachinghistory.org and send your question to a master teacher for advice and ideas.

In this letter, Madison writes to Jefferson in a private code describing opposition to the Constitution. Jefferson's deciphering of the code can be seen above Madison's numbers. "James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, October 17, 1788, Partly in Cipher," James Madison, Library of Congress: [mjim 03_0714_0719](https://www.loc.gov/rr/holdings/item?l=ms.A.9.2.100).



Issues and Research

Keep current with timely issues and research that shape the field of history education.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF HISTORY EDUCATION—COMING SOON!

teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/report-on-the-state-of-history-education/23470

Read our updated report on the State of History Education! Find out which states test history/social studies, require a U.S.



or world history course for graduation, and more. This report describes changes that have happened in states' policies regarding history standards, assessments, and requirements for initial teacher licensure between 2008 and 2010. The report also examines state requirements regarding world history.

Roundtables

ROLE OF MULTIPLE CHOICE ASSESSMENTS IN HISTORY COURSES

teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/roundtable/24605

Is there a place for multiple-choice assessments in the history classroom? Do state or national assessments encourage such practice? Are multiple-choice exams the “coin of the realm” as one roundtable participant argues and, if so, should they be the standard by which all students are assessed?

“‘Assessment’ and ‘accountability’ are the current buzzwords in education. In an ideal world, evaluation would be



“Exam,” albertogp123, July 26, 2006. Online image. Flickr. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/albertogp123/5843577306/>

unnecessary. Socrates never gave grades.” —Theodore Rabb, Emeritus Professor of History at Princeton University and past president of the National Council of History Education

“Even if we agree that multiple-choice exams are not an optimal assessment tool, one hopes Rabb would acknowledge that, no matter what pedagogy is used (lecture or active learning) and whatever material is ‘covered,’ kids should know key historical facts and teachers should be accountable for teaching them...” —J. Martin Rochester, Teaching Professor, Syracuse University

ADVANCED PLACEMENT: ENHANCEMENT OR DISTRACTION?

teachinghistory.org/issues-and-research/roundtable/24967

Does teaching to the test destroy the spirit of AP history classes? Does AP reflect the

type of experience a student would receive in a college U.S. history survey course? Join the discussion with historians, educators, and curriculum specialists to explore both the benefits and the shortcomings of the AP curriculum.

“AP no longer enhances the teaching of history at the high school level because the constraints of ‘teaching to the test’ have overwhelmed my ability to provide a meaningful intellectual challenge to my students.” —Michael Rosenzweig, AP U.S. History Teacher (Highland Park, IL)

“I believe that the AP U.S. History program is extremely beneficial to students. Students are exposed to a variety of primary source documents and asked to evaluate sources, which is an important skill for any citizen.” —Heather Steven, AP U.S. History Teacher (Annapolis, MD)

Research Brief

TEACHER USE OF PRIMARY SOURCES

teachinghistory.org/node/23783

Researchers at Virginia Tech University and Georgia State University surveyed 158 high school history teachers to find out to what extent they used primary source materials in their classroom and what impact the availability of Web-based primary source materials had on their practice. The results showed that while most used primary sources, there was little consensus about how to use them.

In response to a question about why teachers did not use Web-based historical primary sources, the three most frequent answers were:

“No time to search the web for primary sources.”

“Too many web sites to locate suitable primary sources.”

“Inappropriate preparation to use primary sources.”

Here are some teaching tips related to this research:

Explore a few excellent collections of primary sources like the Library of Congress’s American Memory, Our Documents, the National Archives, Digital History, and PBS’s American Experience.

As you browse through available sources (including photographs!), try to think of a historical question that the sources can help students answer.

Use **teachinghistory.org** resources to help you find and use primary sources effectively. Search *Website Reviews* by topic or time period to find primary source collections and see “Finding Sources” at *Using Primary Sources*. Explore *Using Primary Sources*, *Teaching Guides*, and *Lesson Plan Reviews* for methods and ideas about how to use primary sources with your students.

Digital Classroom

Used appropriately, new technologies can be powerful tools to help students develop historical thinking skills and open the classroom to materials and experts from around the world. Find free resources, ideas, and examples of successful practice at teachinghistory.org.

Watch the Digital Classroom introductory video at teachinghistory.org/digital-classroom-intro.



Tech for Teachers

DO I HAVE A RIGHT?

teachinghistory.org/digital-classroom/tech-for-teachers/24975

Developed by iCivics, a project envisioned by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, this upbeat and engaging online game is designed to teach students about the constitutional amendments. To play, each student joins a law firm specializing in constitutional law and gains points for every client they take on and case they win. While aimed at middle school students, the game may also be useful for grades 5-12.

For Younger Students

LITTLE BIRD TALES

teachinghistory.org/digital-classroom/tech-for-teachers/24602

Looking for a way to encourage young children's interest in history through

Logo, Little Bird Tales: littlebirdtales.com.

storytelling? Little Bird Tales allows students to upload or draw their own images, then write and record their voices to tell a story. The simple layout and lack of advertising make it ideal for the elementary classroom. The site offers a free educator account as well as tips on getting started and creating class videos.



Historical Thinking Poster

“Everyone in my office is just swooning over the investigating history poster...”

Request your FREE Historical Thinking Poster today at teachinghistory.org/poster!

Beyond the Chalkboard

VOICETHREAD IN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

www.teachinghistory.org/digital-classroom/beyond-the-chalkboard/24589

Think your students are too young for digital tools? Watch as first-graders in Jennifer Orr's class record stories about Ben Franklin and George Washington using VoiceThread—a tool recommended by the American Association of School Librarians.

First graders create their own digital stories about the Founding Fathers using VoiceThread. "VoiceThread," Chris Preperato, March 2011, teachinghistory.org.



"Copyright license choice," Joshua Gajownik, Feb. 19, 2010, Flickr: flickr.com/photos/opensourceway/4371001458/.

WHEN COPYRIGHT MEETS THE CLASSROOM

www.teachinghistory.org/digital-classroom/ask-a-digital-historian/24710

Q. If I create a Powerpoint for use in my classroom, can I protect myself from copyright infringement by simply adding the URL of the site on which I found the document at the bottom of the page?

A. The very short answer is that copyright is complicated. For educators, though, there are some basic things to know and guidelines to follow that make it less scary. Citing your sources is **always** a good idea. Beyond crediting your source, you are modeling a key skill for students: always pay attention to the source of information, primary and secondary. Learn

more about fair use policies for educational purposes and read the rest of the answer online at teachinghistory.org.



"Photograph of Jefferson High School Marching Colonials Performing on the Steps of the National Archives Building on Constitution Day," 1974, General Services Administration, NARA, ARC Identifier 3493297.

Quiz

Which country has the shortest written constitution?*

Test your knowledge (or your students' knowledge) of the Constitution with our online Constitution Day quizzes! Now searchable by topic or keyword, find a new quiz each week beginning September 5.

teachinghistory.org/history-content/quiz

*Answer: United States

TAH Projects

Discover resources created through Teaching American History (TAH) projects and learn from past and current grants.

Project Spotlight

CONSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIONS

www.teachinghistory.org/tah-grants/project-spotlight/19581

In this TAH grant from the state of Washington, teachers learned strategies for teaching American history through the lens of the U.S. Constitution. Working in History Professional Learning Teams (HPLTs), teachers participated in bimonthly presentations on constitutional themes. In 2008, the Constitutional Rights Foundation organized a four-day summer



Montpelier, the home of James Madison, holds workshops for TAH groups studying the Constitution. "Outside Montpelier," Matt Karlsen, April 2008.

institute about twentieth-century issues in U.S. history, particularly constitutional issues and the presidency. Teachers also had the opportunity to visit James Madison's Montpelier for a workshop on the Bill of Rights and the Constitution.

HERB: SOCIAL HISTORY FOR EVERY CLASSROOM

teachinghistory.org/tah-grants/project-spotlight/24964

Named after labor historian Herb Gutman, HERB focuses on developing online social history materials to better serve English Language Learners and special education audiences. The teaching resources are divided into three collections: *History for All* focuses on the American Revolution,

slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Great Migration, colonial New York, Irish immigration, and early industrialization. *History Matters* focuses on an introduction to social history, the Constitution over time, the Philippine-American War, expansion, emancipation, civil rights, and "how change happens." *Our American Democracy* covers the Progressive Era and the World War II homefront. The three collections offer primary source materials, teaching activities, films, podcasts, and Web projects for classroom use.

Lessons Learned

CONNECTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

teachinghistory.org/tah-grants/lessons-learned/19226

Using lesson study, learn how TAH participants in Oakland, CA, observed and evaluated a lesson that engaged students in considering the meaning of the Fourth Amendment (search and seizure). A teacher arranged for a campus security

guard to walk into the classroom and search the backpacks of three students. (The students had agreed before class to participate in the simulation.) After the search, students in the class were asked to write a brief response explaining whether or not they thought the search was legal. A discussion of this question followed. Then the students tried to rewrite the Fourth Amendment in their own words.

After this introduction, the students examined the Supreme Court case *T.L.O. v. New Jersey* (1985) related to searches of students on school property. Based on this new knowledge, students were asked to revise their statements as to whether or not the search was legal. Read more to see what students learned about the Fourth Amendment.

IMPLEMENTING LESSON STUDY

teachinghistory.org/tah-grants/lessons-learned/24239

In an interview with Associate Professor Mimi Coughlin and TAH Project Director Roni Jones, learn how “lesson study” helped improve the instructional prac-



Teachers from McComb, MS, participate in a workshop to learn how to find digital resources using teachinghistory.org. “TAH workshop,” Chris Preperato, June 2011, teachinghistory.org.

tice of grant participants. As part of the grant, teachers from different grade levels worked together to develop a lesson about the Constitution. Among other outcomes, this multi-grade collaboration led teachers to learn techniques from their colleagues in other grade levels and helped create a new learning community.

In Remembrance: Teaching September 11

teachinghistory.org/spotlight/september11

Teachinghistory.org honors the 10th anniversary of September 11th with a resource page for educators.

Teachinghistory.org is on the Road!

Come see us at

The National Social Studies Supervisors Association Conference

December 1, 2011
Washington, DC

nssa.socialstudies.org/conference



The National Council of Social Studies Conference

Dec. 2-4, 2011
Washington, DC

socialstudies.org/conference



American Historical Association Annual Meeting

January 5-8, 2012
Chicago, IL

[historians.org/
annual/2012](http://historians.org/annual/2012)

American Historical Association

Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting

April 19-22, 2012
Milwaukee, WI

annualmeeting.oah.org/



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Which country has the shortest written constitution?

See page 13 for the answer.
Scan for Constitution Day resources:

